regularising the period of absence of regular government employees by grant of leave as due and admissible. In respect of ED agents, mode of determing the period of absence due to the Postal strike willl be decided after Government's decision on the implementation of the recommendations of Justice Talwar Committee.

**TV Coverage in Gujarat**

*79. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have undertaken the work for expansion of TV coverage in Gujarat, particularly, in those areas which do not receive TV telecast;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether different projects are underway for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Besides augmentation of power at High Power Transmitter (HPT), Bhuj, HPTs at Vadodra and Surat, Low Power Transmitters (LPTs), at Rajula, Khambhalia, Umargaon, Modasa, Lunawada, Jamjodhpur, Rajpipla and Vyara are, at present, under various stages of implementation.

**India's relations with South Africa**

*80. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "PMO mishandling relations with South Africa" which appeared in The Hindustan Times, dated the 3rd November, 1998;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is no policy planning forum in his Ministry; if so, the reasons for keeping the forum defunct for such a long time ignoring all diplomatic norms; and

(d) what results have been achieved after the Prime Minister's visit to South Africa, recently, particularly in strengthening diplomatic relations with their country strongly opposed to nuclear tests of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There has been no mishandling of relations with South Africa.

(c) There is a fully functional, Policy Planning Division in the Ministry of External Affairs and steps are being taken to further strengthen it.

(d) The visit to South Africa was in the context of XII Non-Aligned Summit at Durban on September 2-3, 1998. The visit offered an opportunity to interact with the leadership of South Africa and to explain to them the retionale of India's nuclear tests. Nuclear disarmament continues to be an important element in India's foreign policy and this issue has been discussed with the South African side. Following the Prime Ministerial visit, there have been important visits at significant levels between the two countries covering a wide segment of our bilateral relations. Several high level visits are also due to take place in the near future, which will further strengthen bilateral relations. The Indo-South Africa Joint Commission is scheduled to meet in South Africa on December 4-5, 1998.

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## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

**आलू और प्याज के उत्पादन में गिरावट**

466. श्री बलवंत सिंह रामूवालिया:
श्री कपिल सिब्बल:

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि गत कुछ वर्षों से देश में आलू और प्याज का उत्पादन निरंतर कम होता जा रहा है;